



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

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ASMFC Presents Annual Awards of Excellence

Washington, DC – Last night, state and federal fisheries managers, scientists and fishermen recognized the contributions of several outstanding individuals to the conservation and management Atlantic coastal resources at an evening reception of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Commission Chair, Susan Shipman and Awards Committee Chair, David Cupka had the honor of leading the ceremony of the Commission's Fourth Annual Awards of Excellence (AAE), presenting awards in the areas of law enforcement, management & policy, and scientific, technical & advisory contributions.

"Every year a great many people, both collectively and individually, contribute to the success of fisheries management along the Atlantic coast. The Commission's Annual Awards of Excellence is our way of recognizing outstanding efforts by professionals who have made a difference in the way we manage and conserve Atlantic coastal fisheries," stated ASMFC Chair Susan Shipman of Georgia.

Management & Policy Award

The first award of the evening, which was in the area of management and policy, was presented to Steven Driscoll. From 1993 through 2000, Steve served as New Hampshire's Governor's Appointee to the Commission, bringing to the Commission and its fisheries management planning process years of on-the-water fisheries expertise from his work as a commercial fisherman. Over his seven-year tenure as Commissioner, Steve was instrumental in championing the efforts of the Commission's Governors' Appointees to gain voting rights on all management boards. Even though it meant time away from fishing and lost income, Steve faithfully attended countless Commission meetings, committed to making the Commission process the best it could be. Today, the Commission is a better organization because of his efforts.

Scientific, Technical and Advisory Award

The next two awards were presented to two individuals who have made significant strides in the areas of scientific, technical and advisory contributions – Tom O'Connell of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Doug Vaughan of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research. From 1998 through 2001, Tom served as the Commission's Fishery Management Plan Coordinator for Horseshoe Crab, not as a Commission employee, but on loan from Maryland DNR. Over that time, Tom gracefully coordinated the Commission's Horseshoe Crab Management Board, Technical Committee and Advisory Panel through the entire FMP process for a very challenging species. It was through his leadership and "gentle persuasion" that the Technical Committee worked together to reduce the annual harvest of this species in 2000 by 40 percent instead of the plan's target of 25 percent. It is an honor for both the Commission staff and the Horseshoe Crab Management Board to have worked with Tom to improve the management and conservation of this important species.

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For nearly 20 years, Doug Vaughan has been an active participant in the Commission's programs through his involvement in many stock assessment and technical committees. While he is probably best known for his work with

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

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Atlantic menhaden, which dates back to his 1977 Ph.D. dissertation work at the University of Rhode Island, Doug is also lauded for his pioneering ideas in advancing stock assessments for weakfish and red drum. His contributions has also been felt through his work on various other committees, including the Bycatch Steering Committee, the ACCSP Recreational Fisheries Technical Committee and the ASMFC Power Plant Panel. Our understanding of fisheries biology and stock assessments have been significantly improved because of Doug's contributions.

Law Enforcement Award

The final two awards, both in the area of Law Enforcement, were presented to Captain Jim Hanlon of the Massachusetts Environmental Police and the entire group of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Marine Patrol. For over 24 years, Jim Hanlon has been an environmental police officer for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, supervising the enforcement of state and federal fisheries regulations throughout the region. He has been instrumental in ensuring that all fisheries management plans are adhered to in one of the busiest commercial fishing and landings area on the East Coast, while keeping in mind the needs of the resource as well as the many stakeholder groups. Jim has been a key player in developing, writing, implementing and maintaining a cooperative enforcement agreement and a joint enforcement agreement with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), establishing an exceptional working relationship with NMFS and Coast Guard personnel.

The last award of the evening was presented to an entire SCDNR Marine Patrol for their innovative and standard-setting efforts in joint state/federal fisheries law enforcement. In the late 1980s, the Patrol signed an agreement with NMFS that established cross-deputization of state marine patrol officers as federal fisheries enforcement agents, allowing state marine patrol officers to enforce U.S. fisheries laws in federal waters. In 1998, the Patrol and NMFS established a closer working relationship through implementation of a joint enforcement agreement (JEA), and funding was provided to support an enhanced cooperative offshore enforcement program. The JEA has been a terrific success, resulting in prosecution of over 90 federal cases and more than 300 state cases. The Patrol has designed a computer-tracking program to collect and manage data on enforcement efforts and prosecutions, which NMFS has lauded as the standard for JEA efforts in other states. Effective law enforcement is the key to effective fisheries management. Through their commitment to strengthening cooperative efforts in fisheries law enforcement, Jim Hanlon and the SCDNR Marine Patrol have shown us that we can best achieve our shared goals by working together cooperatively.

The Commission established the Annual Awards of Excellence in 1998 in an effort to recognize the important contributions of individuals to the success of the organization. The awards are given in the areas of law enforcement, legislation, management & policy and scientific, technical & advisory contributions. Each year, the Commission seeks nominees in the four areas of expertise and honors the very best of those nominees at its Spring Meeting, generally held in May or June. For more information about the Annual Awards of Excellence, please contact Laura Leach, Director of Finance and Administration, at (202)289-6400.

NOTE TO PRESS: If you would like to receive the Commission's press releases via email, please contact Tina Berger, Public Affairs & Resource Specialist, at tberger@asmfc.org or fax to (202) 289-6051.

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